

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02 L-03

OMB-01 XMB-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8649

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAIR GB

SUBJECT: GABON: PROSPECTIVE AIRCRAFT PURCHASES

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT BONGO WISHES OBTAIN ADDITIONAL LOCKHEED L-100 AND NEW GRUMMAN GULFSTREAM. ACTION REQUESTED: PRICE QUOTATIONS ON NEW L-100 AND GULFSTREAM, AND PRICE AND AVAILABILITY INFORMATION ON USED L-100S OR C-130S. END SUMMARY.

1. MET EVENING JANUARY 4 WITH PRESIDENT BONGO AT HIS REQUEST TO DISCUSS PRESIDENTS INTEREST IN ACQUIRING ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT.
2. PRESIDENT OPENED CONVERSATION BY ASKING WHETHER \$2 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS BEING MADE AVAILABLE IN FY 1977 (ABOUT WHICH HE HAD BEEN INFORMED THROUGH HIS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON) COULD BE APPLIED TO PURCHASE OF A THIRD LOCKHEED L-100. GOG HE SAID WOULD THEN PAY BALANCE FROM ITS OWN FUNDS, HOPEFULLY OBTAINING FINANCING ALONG LINES OF THAT OFFERED ON OTHER TWO L-100S IT CURRENTLY OWNS.
3. I POINTED OUT TO PRESIDENT PROBLEM THAT SEEMED LIKELY TO ARISE FROM FACT THAT PURCHASE OF AIRCRAFT WITH FMS FUNDS WOULD MARK IT AS MILITARY MATERIAL, AND THUS INELIGIBLE FOR EXIMBANK FINANCING APPLIED TO FIRST AND SECOND L-100S. IN VIEW OF THIS

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POTENTIAL COMPLICATION, PRESIDENT DECIDED TO SEEK THIRD L-100 ON COMMERCIAL TERMS AS IN PAST, AND ASKED IF WE COULD OBTAIN FOR HIM CURRENT PRICE QUOTATION ON NEW L-100, AS WELL AS INFORMATION ABOUT AVAILABILITY AND PRICE OF GOOD USED L-100S OR C-130S.

4. BONGO THEN TURNED TO HIS PERSONAL AIRCRAFT REQUIREMENTS,

AND ASKED FOR QUOTATION ON " LATEST MADEL" GRUMMAN GULFSTREAM, PRESIDENT DID NOT SPECIFY MODEL HE SEEKS, BUT INDICATED HE WISHES AIRCRAFT WHICH COULD BE CUSTOMIZED TO OFFER PRIVATE CABIN ALONG WITH SPACE FOR FEW AIDES. PRESIDENT ADDED THAT HE PROPOSES BUY NEW AIRCRAFT HIMSELF, PERHAPS WITH ASSISTANCE MAURICE TMEPLESMAN, RATHER THAN WITH GOG FUNDS.

5. COMMENT: WITH REGARD TO L-100, DIRECTEUR DE CABINET MAYILA SUGGESTED TO PRESIDENT THAT PURCHASE OF THIRD AIRCRAFT BE DEFERRED UNTIL ECONOMICS OF OPERATING FIRST TWO HAVE BEEN DETERMEINED, BUT PRESIDENT PRESSED AHEAD WITH INSISTENCE ON OBTAINING QUOTATIONS PROMPTLY. ON GRUMMAN, PRESIDENT CURRENTLY HAS GULFSTREAM II, THOUGH PRESUMABLY NOT INTER CONTINENTAL VERSION. FOR NEW AIRCRAFT, HE MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT PROPOSED GULFSTREAM III, DUE TO BE IN SERVICE LATE 1979, OR MAY SIMPLY WNAT STRETCHED, LONGER RANGE GULFSTREAM II.

6. ACTIONREQUESTED: QUATATION ON BOTH TYPES OF AIRCRAFT, WITH AT LEAST PRELIMINARY FIGURES IF POSSIBLE PRIOR TO BONGOS DEPARTURE FOR LOME ON JANUARY9. LOCKHEED QUATATON SHOULD INCLUDE BOTH NEW AND USED AIRCRAFT, AND GRUMMAN SHOULD QUOTE ON BOTH GULFSTREAM II AND III MODELS, INDICATING DELIVERY DATES FOR EACH. STEIGMAN

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